

Automobile-Age Tourism in Eastham, 1900-1960: A Context Statement

Prepared for the Eastham Historic Properties Survey Project
By Kathryn Grover, August 2005

Up to 1960 Eastham's twentieth-century experience was marked not only by great change in land use but also by how transformed perceptions of Cape Cod in general fueled that change. Over roughly half a century, off-Cape people began to regard differently land that had long lain unused or been put to agricultural uses, either for subsistence or profit. In 1889 a regional railroad guide wrote of Cape Cod's "treeless, almost verdureless barren plains, windswept and bleak." Yet by 1939 *Here's New England!*, part of the Federal Writers' Project American Guide Series, declared that the "knolls of scrub pine" along U.S. Route 6 were part of what made for "an interesting day's drive" from Bourne to Provincetown.¹

The reevaluation of Cape Cod halted the downward slide of its population. Over both the Cape as a whole and in Eastham in particular, population began to climb between 1920 and 1930 and never again to slip. Moreover, seasonal population far exceeded the permanent population. Like any short- or long-term migration, pushes and pulls inspired land use changes and the population growth that accompanied them. The declining viability of farming, the corresponding availability of relatively inexpensive land, the widespread affordability of the automobile, and improved roads all helped make the Cape an accessible vacation and retirement space. For the most part after 1920—though important earlier examples exist—farmers either themselves subdivided their property or sold large parcels to off-Cape entrepreneurs who subdivided them.

Judging from deed, city directory, and census research on Kingsbury Beach and Campground roads to Cape Cod Bay, primarily middle- and working-class people bought lots on the west side of Eastham from an early point (research needs to be done on the background of oceanside buyers). For the most part, bayside buyers were from Boston, its near and more distant suburbs, and other Massachusetts places; an unusual number of Kingsbury Beach Road buyers were from

¹ An 1889 Old Colony railroad brochure for 1889, quoted in Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 203; *Here's New England! A Guide to Vacationland* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939), 21.

Worcester and towns contiguous to that city. For every off-Cape buyer there were dozens of renters for the Eastham's cabins and cottages; some returned for many summers to the same properties. At that same time that the first cottages arose on land formerly farmed, grazed, or unimproved, an array of support services sprang up on Route 6 to cater to motorists. More of Eastham's permanent residents turned from agriculture and earlier traditional occupations to trades and services that were part of the newfound tourism economy.

This context places Eastham within the overall development of Cape Cod as a tourist region. It has relied upon such primary sources as deeds, probate records, subdivision plans, federal and state population and agricultural censuses, county and local histories, existing transcripts of local oral histories, historical studies of twentieth-century tourism in New England and on Cape Cod, and some popular literature on the region. It will begin with a brief description of the character of Eastham before 1900 and then turn to the question of how particular changes after the turn of the twentieth century ushered in the era of automobile tourism. Using examples from the larger project's analysis of Campground and Kingsbury Beach roads and several individual properties, the context will analyze first the development of summer and second homes and tourist accommodations and services up to the Second World War; it will then cover the postwar years up to 1960.² It will conclude with a description and analysis of Eastham's twentieth-century year-round and seasonal domestic architecture up to 1960.

Eastham before 1900

In 1880, ninety-six of the 277 Eastham residents for whom occupations were listed in the federal census were either farmers (fifty-nine) or farm laborers (thirty-seven). An equal number were working in maritime occupations, most as fishermen (seventy) and the rest as master mariners (five) or mariners (eleven) or at the lifesaving station as surfmen (six) or lighthouse keepers (four). Together Eastham people working on farms or on the ocean composed 69.2 percent of the

² The individual Eastham properties included in the overall study were 55 Clark's Point Road, 50 Hay Road (now Starfish Condominiums), 20 & 30 Smith Heights Road (Smith Heights cottages), 205 Ocean View Drive, and 705 Doane Road.

workforce. Another 12.3 percent, or thirty-four people, worked at skilled trades, twelve as carpenters; seven women worked as dressmakers, seamstresses, and a milliner's apprentice. The rest of the workforce were in service occupations (eighteen, eight as "servants" and five doing "housework" or housekeeping outside the home), sales or clerical jobs (twenty-six, five of them in a telegraph office at the lighthouse), civic or professional work (five), and industry (two).

The days of Eastham's heralded corn production had long passed by 1880. When Barnstable County historian Enoch Pratt wrote of Eastham sending "more than a thousand bushels . . . to market" in 1844, he intimated that the town had already seen the better days of that bounty. "In years past more than three times that quantity has been exported," Pratt observed. "Formerly several farms raised five hundred bushels of grain annually, and one eight hundred bushels."³ By 1865, Eastham was fourth among the fifteen Cape towns in rye production, had no wheat, barley, or oat crop, and was seventh in Indian corn production. Grain farming, combined with decimation of the original oak and pine timber for fuel and shipbuilding, wore and blew away the natural light and sandy soil. In 1865, while corn was still the crop of highest value for town farmers at \$5,855.80, the value of eggs sold was a close second at \$5,386.00.⁴

The arrival of Old Colony Railroad in Eastham in 1870 stimulated a more intensive approach to agriculture; for a short time, at least, it brought Cape farmers within the Boston "egg shed." Local historian Alice Lowe recalled, "The 'depot' as it was always called, became the center of activity. Several men who conducted dairy or chicken farms, began to use the new railway express service for sending their milk to dealers in Provincetown or their eggs to Boston." The 1880 federal agricultural schedules list 108 farmers in town, eight of whom were either selling milk or sending it to butter and cheese factories, from as little as fifty to as much as four

³ Rev. Enoch Pratt, *A Comprehensive History, Ecclesiastical and Civil, of Eastham, Wellfleet and Orleans, County of Barnstable, Mass. from 1644 to 1844* (Yarmouth, MA.: W. S. Fisher and Co., 1844), 4-5.

⁴ "Eastham Comprehensive Community Survey Report: Final Report" (Leominster, MA: Commonweal Collaborative, September 1995), 7; Oliver Warner, comp., *Statistical Information Relating to Certain Branches of Industry in Massachusetts, for the Year Ending May 1, 1865* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1866).

thousand gallons. Never were more cows counted in Eastham than in 1885.⁵

The egg business was clearly also a serious enterprise by that time. Ezekiel Doane, Eastham's most prosperous farmer in 1880, sold 1,500 dozen eggs and 800 gallons of milk from a ninety-four-acre farm valued at \$10,000; the value of his farm production was estimated at \$1,650. Seth Knowles, on a farm just two acres smaller and valued at \$5,000, sold 2,000 dozen eggs and 2,500 gallons of milk; his farm products were valued at \$1,150. Reuben Nickerson, also one of the two most prosperous farmers listed in the 1860 agricultural census, had a 140-acres farm valued at \$5,000 farm value and farm products worth an estimated \$1,500. Nickerson sold 1,500 dozen eggs and 4,000 gallons of milk, and both he and Doane had to hire farm labor.⁶ By 1885 the value of farm products overall in Eastham was \$54,098, with poultry set at \$9,420. The 1901 Cape Cod directory lists eighty-seven farmers in Eastham, of whom sixteen are listed in the later directory as specializing in poultry or poultry and milk. By then the poultry business had peaked: the number of fowl assessed in Eastham reached its height between 1895 and 1940 at 8,043.⁷

Before the turn of the century Eastham farmers had also turned to the three truck crops on which their twentieth-century endeavor would depend—in order of value, asparagus, turnips, and cranberries. “The peculiar adaptation of the soil to the culture of turnips and asparagus, and the increasing demand for these vegetables as an export, has led to a thorough trial which promises good results,” Barnstable County historian Simeon Deyo wrote in 1890. “Of the latter, forty acres have been so readily and profitably cultivated that nearly as many more have been

⁵ In 1885 181 cows were taxed; by 1940 44 were. The number of cows in town rose more or less steadily from 1865 to 1885 and then dropped in the same manner through 1940. See Rural Policy Committee of Eastham, “A Preliminary Report on Rural Policy for the Town of Eastham” (Typescript, [1940]), 12, Ralph Chase Collection, Eastham Historical Society Archives.

⁶ Alice A. Lowe, comp., *Nauset on Cape Cod: A History of Eastham* (Provincetown, MA: Shank Painter Printing Co. For Eastham Historical Society, 1968), 42; “Schedule 2.—Productions of Agriculture in Eastham in the County of Barnstable, State of Massachusetts, enumerated by me on the 4th day of June, 1880. Silas H. Stuart, Enumerator.” The only copy of the 1860 and 1880 state agricultural schedules I could locate was at University of Massachusetts Amherst, which made a microfilm copy available through interlibrary loan.

⁷ Rev. Elias Nason and George J. Varney, rev. *A Gazetteer of the State of Massachusetts with Numerous Illustrations* (Boston: B. B. Russell, 1890), 285-86; Rural Policy Committee, “Preliminary Report,” 12.

planted.” In 1885 cranberries, grown on bogs developed on swampland, were valued at \$2,355.⁸

While Eastham men tended to be mariners before the Civil War, they were more apt to be fishermen afterward. “The entire fisheries product was \$39,453” in 1890, a gazetteer of the state noted that year. “A great variety of fish was taken, though in small quantities. Bluefish formed the bulk of the catch, reaching 367,938 pounds, worth \$26,057.”⁹ Industry, however, had never gained a foothold in the town. Lack of water power, poor transportation, and sheer distance from coal supplies (the other chief source of power) inhibited it in Eastham and across the Cape as whole. Only salt making was moderately prosperous, and only from about 1830 to the Civil War. According to the town’s 1935 Rural Policy Committee, by 1885 the town had only two factories producing goods valued at \$1,050, though the 1890 gazetteer put that value at \$5,860. “By the turn of the century,” the town committee wrote of Eastham industry, “all evidence of such enterprises had disappeared.”¹⁰

The absence of industry, the amount of both open and agricultural land, and the access to shore and ocean provided by the railroad began to open Eastham to tourism after 1870. Between 1828 and 1863, the Methodist camp meetings on the east end of Campground Road may well have been a precursor to the vacation habit in the town. Most estimates of the number of attendees at the annual summer meetings at the ten-acre Millennium Grove are vague; only Henry David Thoreau, who visited in October 1849—a year when the meeting had not been held because its organizers feared the spread of cholera—offered a firm number. “There are sometimes one hundred and fifty ministers, (!) and five thousand hearers, assembled,” he wrote in 1855.¹¹ The

⁸ Simeon L. Deyo, ed., *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts* (New York: H. W. Blake and Company, 1890), 726; Nason and Varney, *Gazetteer*, 285-86.

⁹ Nason and Varney, *Gazetteer*, 285-86.

¹⁰ Lewis M. Alexander, “The Impact of Tourism on the Economy of Cape Cod, Massachusetts,” *Economic Geography* 29, 4 (October 1953): 320; Nason and Varney, *Gazetteer*, 285-86; Rural Policy Committee, “Preliminary Report,” 9.

¹¹ Henry David Thoreau, *Cape Cod* (1855; rept, New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1984), 881.

degree of off-Cape participation is not clear. While Cape historian James O'Connell has stated that the antebellum "tent revivals attracted mainly a Cape Cod audience," historian Ellen Weiss has stated that the Eastham meeting "was especially beloved by the Bostonians," who came by regularly scheduled packets to Campground Landing at the west end of Campground Road. Many were probably devotees of the preaching of the Reverend Edward T. Taylor (1793-1871), the so-called "sailor preacher" of Boston's Seamen's Bethel, who was a regular among the many who preached at Millennium Grove.¹²

As early as 1839, though, the Methodist historian Nathan Bangs had begun to worry that the camp meeting movement was drifting from its primary goals—to be awakened to one's sin and "converted," and put on the path to holiness or sanctification; to renew one's faith; or to stop "backsliding"—toward a dangerous a "pic-nic spirit."¹³ Indeed, Thoreau, taking note of the heaps of clamshells under the tables at Millennium Grove a decade later, surmised that the camp meeting "must be a singular combination of a prayer-meeting and a picnic. . . . The attention of those who frequent the camp-meetings at Eastham is said to be divided between the preaching of the Methodists and the preaching of the billows on the backside of the Cape." Gilbert Haven, a longtime attendee of the Eastham meeting and a Methodist minister himself, seemed to be somewhat more inclined to "pic-nic spirit" that so concerned Bangs. Writing from Eastham in 1857, Haven described the "fresh sea air" and the "magnificent bathing in the real Atlantic outside Cape Cod" in a letter to his family.

I wish you were both here, taking the sea baths, hearing, seeing, loafing under these pleasant little trees, and having a quiet and delicious time. We had a delightful sail down. The waves were quiet and the moon glorious; the crowd was good natured, scattered around on the decks under the open sky, most of them without sleep. We arrived about four o'clock in the morning, and had a grand, dancing boat, leaping over the big waves on which we rolled to the shore, jumped off into the surf, and entered the nicest and quietest of groves.¹⁴

¹² James C. O'Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod: Creating a Seaside Resort* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2003), 5; Ellen Weiss, *City in the Woods: The Life and Design of an American Camp Meeting on Martha's Vineyard* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 12.

¹³ Nathan Bangs quoted in Weiss, *City in the Woods*, 7.

¹⁴ Thoreau, *Cape Cod*, 881-82, 894-95; Haven quoted in Weiss, *City in the Woods*, 12.

The arrival of the Old Colony Railroad in Eastham had an immediate effect on the town's resort prospects. The Eastham Land Company was formed within three years of the railroad's arrival and, in 1873 and 1874, laid out ten sections of lots east of the rail tracks. Though this study has not determined exactly when, three of these ten appear to have been realized at least in part—Section One (1873), a 146-lot subdivision bordering Minister Pond on the northwest; Section Three (1873), thirty-six lots with Nauset Road as its northwest border and intersected by Schoolhouse Road; and Section 5 (May 1874), a 70-lot plan with Schoolhouse Road for its eastern border and Nauset Road at its western edge. The Section One street names Pine, Fairview, Alston, Knowles, Chipman, Park (north-south), Clark, Doane Street, and Piper Lane (east-west) date to 1873; in Section Three Spring, Church, and Dexter streets date to that year; and in Section Five Chester, Walnut, Forrest avenues date to 1874 but are not continuous as the plan shows them to be, and Water Street also dates to that year. The largest proposed subdivision, Section Four, had 316 lots bordering the ocean.¹⁵ This study has not, however, been able to determine who created Eastham Land Company: while plans of all ten subdivisions are on file at the Barnstable County Registry, none of them are attributed or are accompanied by or refer to deeds that would permit such identification, and grantor/grantee indexes contain no other references to the company.

The land company's venture strongly suggests the stimulating effect of the railroad in Eastham: it had been such a trigger on successive Upper Cape towns as it made its way east. Soon after the rail company came, such lodging and boarding places as the Iron Spring House opened up in the town, and by the early 1890s Eastham's remote and advantageous location of the Atlantic flyway came to the attention of gunners. By the turn of the century, according to O'Connell, there were

¹⁵ See "Plan of Sea-Shore Lots Belonging to Eastham Land Company, ca. 1873, G. H. Kimball Surveyor" (copied 1958), Barnstable County Plan Book 145:11, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds. The Barnstable County Registry offers online access; see <http://199.232.150.242/ALIS/WW400R.PGM>. Plan 145:11 shows Sections 1-4; see also these May 1874 Eastham Land Company plans: 25:27 (Section 5); 25:21 (Section 6), 25:23 (Section 7), 25:25 (Section 8), 25:29 (Section 9), 25:31 (Section 10), and 52:135 (a March 1936 revision of Section 1). Barnstable County Plan Books are hereafter cited as BCP.

more than forty “professional gunning stands, or duck-hunting camps” on the Cape. Perhaps among the first in Eastham was the later famed “House on Nauset Marsh,” purchased early in 1892 by Maurice Howe Richardson, soon to become the first surgeon-in-chief of Massachusetts General Hospital, and his brother-in-law, the landscape painter Frank Wiggins Benson. According to Benson’s biographer, Richardson, Benson, and another of Richardson’s brothers-in-law, Edward Pierson, had long wanted “a shack somewhere by the sea where [he] might fish and shoot ducks and shorebirds.”

Years later, in a letter to Maurice’s son, Wyman, with whom he spent many hours hunting and fishing, [Benson] reminisced about the ‘odd chance that landed [them] in Eastham’ on Cape Cod. They’d considered Ipswich, he recalled, but it was too frequented. They’d decided in the late fall of 1891 to meet at the train and go to Chatham to look things over. On the way to the station, gun over his shoulder, he stopped to rest his gear on the sidewalk when a friend, Ernest Ives, saw him and inquired as to his destination. ‘Don’t go to Chatham,’ Ives said, ‘too many gunners. Go to North Eastham and stop with John Horton and he will show you around.’ Nothing suited the men until they struck the head of the marsh at Little Creek. Benson wrote, ‘When we saw that we didn’t want to look further. There were black ducks and whistlers before us and the place seemed just what we were looked for. . . . We agreed on a price of \$650. Your father took one half and Uncle Ned and I each took one quarter.’¹⁶

Dwight Blaney, also a landscape artist from Boston and Benson’s close friend, bought land on Great Pond off Kingsbury Beach Road for another early gunning camp in 1896 and 1897. By 1919, and possibly earlier, at least five other gunning camps were in Eastham—Great Pond Camp, another Richardson family camp on the south side of Great Pond; the Luce (later Guild) Camp; the Hemenway (later McCluskey) camp just above Hemenway Landing Road; the Mixer family camp, on Bridge Road; and several on Coast Guard beach that have not survived.¹⁷

¹⁶ On gunning camps, see O’Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 5; on the Cape’s railroad-era resorts, *ibid.*, 8-44; On the Iron Spring House, see Old Town Center Historic District Area Form, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston; on Richardson and Benson, see Faith Andrews Bedford, *Frank W. Benson: A Retrospective* (New York: Berry-Hill Galleries, Inc., May 17-June 24, 1989), 164 n. 65 quoting a 27 August 1940 letter. For the deed, see Herbert M. Davis to Maurice H. Richardson and Frank W. Benson, 12 January 1892, Barnstable Deeds 199:351. Barnstable County Deeds are hereafter cited as BCD.

¹⁷ Thanks to Robert L. Mumford and Sarah Korjeff for information on Eastham gunning camps. The two maps by Quincy Adams Shaw Jr., actually the third in the Shaw family bearing that name, drew two maps of Eastham’s gunning camps and their owners on Nauset Marsh, one documenting those of 1919-24 and the other of 1919-54. These Shaw maps are in a private collection. Marilyn Schofield, Eastham Historical Society archivist, who cooked for the Mixer family in the 1950s, recalls that the Mixters were brothers and a son Sam, who was one of the two surgeons in the family from Boston. The Mixters used to hunt with the Richardsons and had a big stucco farmhouse off Bridge Street on the bay side with no electricity or running water and a big stone fireplace. The camp is extant.

It is evident, too, that the relative isolation of the area appealed to people other than gunners before 1900. Even as regional writer Samuel Adams Drake dismissed the Cape beyond Orleans as “simply a wilderness of sand” and claimed that the entire Cape was viewed as “a sort of terra incognita by fully half of New England” in 1876, novelist Henry James wrote through his *Bostonians* protagonist Basil Ransom of the “soft scrubbiness” of the Cape landscape. Ransom had heard the region referred to as “the Italy, so to speak, of Massachusetts” and in favorable comparison to such resorts as Saratoga Springs, Newport, and Nahant:

It had been described to him as the drowsy Cape, the languid Cape, the Cape not of storms, but of eternal peace. He knew that the Bostonians had been drawn thither, for the hot weeks, by its sedative influence, by the conviction that its toneless air would minister to perfect rest. . . . They wanted to live idly, to unbend and lie in hammocks, and also to keep out of the crowd, and rush of the watering-place.¹⁸

By 1900, the occupational profile of Eastham residents had changed. The proportion of the work force in maritime occupations fell dramatically between 1880 and 1900, from 34.6 to 9.9 per cent of those with occupations listed in the federal census. As fishing predominated, it seems likely that most fishermen had moved to the such major fishing ports of Boston and Gloucester. Farmers and farm laborers increased from 34.6 to 58.4 percent of the popular, no doubt reflecting the greater overall importance of market gardening in the economy with the arrival of the railroad. Those in sales/clerical occupations and the skilled trades held somewhat lesser shares of the overall work force, there were no industrial workers, and the proportion of service workers rose from 6.5 to 10.4 per cent between 1880 and 1900. Of those twenty-one persons in service jobs, twelve were housekeepers or servants, two were washerwomen, four were cooks, and two

The 1930 Brookline, MA, census records a Samuel Mixter, age 38, a partner in a bond house, wife Ann, daughter Elizabeth, son Samuel age 8, and two servants on Warren Street, and a Charles G. Mixter, age 47, a surgeon, and his wife Helen, sons Worthington, Charles, Roger, daughter Ann, and two servants, on Chapel Street. It seems possible that Mixter knew the Richardsons from Massachusetts General and may have come to Eastham because of them. Richardson’s son Edward lived in Brookline and was also a surgeon.

¹⁸ Samuel Adams Drake, *Nooks and Corners of the New England Coast* (1876), quoted in Brown, *Inventing New England*, 9; Henry James, *The Bostonians*, quoted in *People and Places on the Outer Cape: A Landscape Character Study* (University of Massachusetts Amherst and National Park Service, June 2004), 98.

were guides, no doubt for the gunners. One of those guides was Thomas C. Nickerson, who was for many years the caretaker of Frank Benson's house at Nauset Marsh. Benson memorialized "Old Tom" in a watercolor in 1923 and an etching in 1925.¹⁹ The 1901 Cape Cod directory listed twenty-five seasonal residents among 258 Eastham residents, and it seems likely that the housekeepers, cooks, and laundresses were working both for them and for the town's few affluent residents.

Eastham, 1900-1945

In 1900, six hundred cars were registered in the commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 1893 the state had created its first highway commission, which had assumed responsibility for Route 3 expenditures, and in the latter part of that decade the commission surfaced the road in macadam. At the same time it laid out Route 28 along the southern part of the Cape. In 1910, more than 31,000 motor vehicles of all kinds were registered in the state; it was then sixth among all states in total registered motor vehicles. By the middle of the teens, Route 6 was blacktopped from Orleans to Provincetown.²⁰

The initial expense of the car kept it, however briefly, out of reach of the great mass of Americans. Before the institution of the installment plan for cars in the 1920s, the "two great new purchasing factors" for them were "the farmer and the man with the middle-class income," according to Alfred E. Reeves of the American Motor Car Manufacturers' Association in 1909. Indeed, many early purchasers were physicians, merchants, and other "moneyed" businessmen who often used their cars in the course of their work. Moreover, most early road improvement campaigns were stimulated by the need for better farm-to-market transportation.²¹

¹⁹ On the two Nickerson portraits, see Faith Andrews Bedford, *Frank W. Benson, American Impressionist* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), 204-205, reproduction on 204.

²⁰ James J. Flink, *America Adopts the Automobile, 1895-1910* (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1970), 75, table 2.1; 78, table 2.3; O'Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 47. Lowe, *Nauset on Cape Cod*, 38-39, wrote, "Soon after the turn of the century, with the advent of the automobile, it became necessary to provide a harder surface for the State Highways. It was in Eastham that experiments were first made with a new top constructed of tar and sand in that section of roadway which extends from Stony Hill to the residence of George T. Dill. Wooden tanks were used to carry and spread the tar on the leveled sandy stretch, and many local men were employed on the project."

²¹ Flink, *America Adopts the Automobile*, 72-73; John B. Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life* (Cambridge,

Probably most, if not all, of the twenty-five seasonal residents of Eastham listed in the 1901 Cape Cod directory had arrived by train.²² Six of the twenty-five were Bostonians, three were from Boston suburbs, one each were from Salem, Rockland, and Lowell, four were from towns to the southwest (Fall River, Attleboro, and Providence), two were from Springfield, and one was from Atlantic City. Blaney and Richardson are not listed, probably because they were not in Eastham on a long-term or regular basis. The occupations of twelve of the twenty-five are known. Eight were probably in comfortable circumstances: among them a jewelry manufacturer, a publisher of city directories, a widow with two servants in her Boston household on Commonwealth Avenue, a superintendent of a commercial stable in New York City, a wholesale fish dealer in Providence with one servant in his household, a potato sales agent in Springfield, a merchant of oriental goods in Boston, and the wife or mother of a partner in Boston fish firm. There were also two ministers. Of the twenty-five, at least seven had some family connection to Eastham—the New Yorker John H. Smart, Stillman P. Doane of Providence, Benjamin F. Freeman of Atlantic City, Freeman C. and Walter M. Hatch of Springfield, Mrs. Lucinda C. Lombard of Somerville, and Mrs. Elizabeth A. Dill of Boston.

Still, that the car was already becoming preferable to the railroad is clear from early periodical and travel literature. “Many people will prefer to travel from place to place more slowly than at present. . . rather than to rush blindly along iron rails,” an article in a 1900 issue of *Review of Reviews* declared. “And if the automobile does that for us, if it makes us see more of our own country, out of beaten lines, and see it more quietly and sanely, it will have rendered a splendid service to our American life and character.”²³ Car ownership rapidly spread: where there was one

MA, and London: MIT Press, 1971), 53-54.

²² James O’Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 47, has stated that the first car on the Cape was Centerville businessman Charles Ayling’s Stanley Steamer, which in 1901 took from “dawn to dusk” to accomplish the trip to Provincetown at fifteen miles per hour.

²³ Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1979), 23.

for every 9,499 persons in 1900, there was one car to every thirteen persons in 1920.²⁴

By the time Route 6—then known as King’s Road—was paved with asphalt, it was clear to some Cape residents that tourism was becoming at least one way to make a living. “More and more the Cape is being visited for week end auto trips by those who cannot afford the time to take vacations of longer duration,” an editorial in *Cape Cod Magazine* noted in the summer of 1918. “An especial effort should be made to make the stay of all visitors pleasant and everyone should be given to understand that the latch-string is always out to new-comers.”²⁵ Bostonians, among others—including Maine lumbermen and that state’s former governor, Abner Coburn—had been buying Eastham Land Company lots from 1875 forward. In September 1909, farmer Alonzo K. Higgins sold William E. Wood of Arlington a half-acre parcel on Cape Cod Bay on north side of Campground Road. This sale may have inspired Higgins to create his subdivision plan of September 1912, thirty-four lots—of which Wood’s was the thirty-fourth—that ranged along Campground Road to the south and the bay on the west. Higgins had sold seven of the thirty-four lots by the time the plan was filed with the county registry. The plan also created Bay Road, originally conceived as a right-angled road that ran within 105 feet to the bay instead of turning north; its planned alignment is now West Shore Road. Most of the lots had between seventy and seventy-five feet of frontage on either Campground or Bay roads; the lots ranging north from Campground Road were deeper, just more than 150 feet, while those fronting Bay Road tended to range from 100 to 115 feet. The bayside lots were uniformly larger.²⁶

A little more than a year after Higgins planned his subdivision, Robert E. Horton, whose father Robert R. Horton had been a grocer and postmaster in North Eastham, purchased a large parcel

²⁴ Rae, *Road and the Car*, 50 table 3.4.

²⁵ Editorial, *Cape Cod Magazine* 4, 3, July 1918, 13.

²⁶ See Higgins to William E. Wood, 20 September 1909, BCD 296:389, and “Plan of Cottage Lots Belonging to Alonzo Higgins, No. Eastham, Mass. . . . Sept. 1912,” BCP 58:5 (also BCP 2:123, 4:121). Wood had also purchased a parcel further east on Campground Road (possibly now 255) in 1897 and 1898 from E. Hattie Higgins, the wife of Asa Higgins) and Isaiah A. Whorf, probably a native of Wellfleet but then of Winthrop. See BCD 235:523 and 230:34. Wood’s identity is not yet clear, but he may have been related to the Higgins family.

abutting Higgins's subdivision on the north from Snow Y. Higgins, one of Alonzo Higgins's brothers, and the heirs of Eastham farmer John Fulcher. In the 1860s the land had belonged to farmers Barnabas K. Mayo and William H. Nickerson, and both Fulcher and Higgins had purchased their parcels in 1881. In late January 1915 Horton, then living in Boston, laid out sixty-four lots—all but the bayside parcels measuring seventy-five by one hundred feet—and four roads; these latter became the northward extension of Bay Road, Gail's Way, Marion's Way, and Gile Road. Before late January 1921 at least thirty-one of these sixty-four lots had been sold. In early October 1925 Horton expanded the subdivision to seventy-six lots—another twelve on the north side of Gile Road. In April 1934 Horton planned his last subdivision in the area to the north of the 1925 plan—the extension of Bay Road west to the bay, the platting of Memory Lane northward and the short Nan's Way, Jean's Way, and Horton Way north of Bay Road, and lots 77 through 108.²⁷

By 1912, in South Eastham between Route 6 and Town Cove, the farmer and weir fisherman Frances W. Smith built seven cottages on land he and his wife Sarah Doane Smith owned. Sarah Smith had inherited the southern part of the parcel from the farmer Jonathan Snow in 1869; her husband purchased the northern section, about six acres, from his wife's father, Charles T. Doane, and uncle, Abelino E. Doane (who owned land bordering Smith's purchase on the north) in 1894. The Smiths' 1916 plan for the property shows the seven cottages,²⁸ and Francis Smith's granddaughter Sadie Flint recalled of him, "He had a farm and he had a weir out in the Bay, where he caught fish and sent them to Boston. And then later, maybe in 1910 or '11, he built cottages on the bluff on the Cove and rented them to people." Among them, Flint recalled in 1977, was a photographer from Taunton named William Hunter. "He used to rent the cottage every season—before the First World War, as I remember. He'd work all week and his wife would stay here. He'd come down on Saturday afternoons." One of the cottages at Smith

²⁷ See Snow Y. Higgins, Eastham, to Robert E. Horton, Boston, 31 October 1918, and Josephine H. Fulcher to Horton, 1 November 1918, BCD 323:523. For Horton's plans see BCP 3:17, 15:43, and 49:35.

²⁸ See BCD 212:289 and "Plan of Lands of Francis W. Smith and of Sarah M. Smith, Eastham, Mass. . . 1916," BCP 4:133.

Heights, as Francis Smith called the grouping, was named for Hunter; others were the Williams, McKechnie, and Gooch cottages. Flint also identified two other early regular renter, “Mr. Scudder” and “Mr. Thompson,” in an early photograph taken on the steps of one of the Smith Heights cottages.²⁹ The 1910 federal census for Taunton lists a William T. Hunter with his “own income” (suggesting his photography was avocational) and living with his wife Betsey and four lodgers in his household—including Fred M. Scudder, a messenger at city hall.

The enterprising Edwin E. Phillips may have had designs on Eastham’s oceanside land. Between 1900 and 1916, Phillips bought twenty parcels in the Nauset section of town. In 1914 he bought nineteen lots in Eastham Land Company’s Sections 4 and 6, and in May 1916 he purchased another two lots in Section 6. Exactly a year later Phillips placed an advertisement in *Cape Cod Magazine* for his Pilgrim Heights development at Provincetown. Phillips, who advertised the lots at one hundred to five hundred dollars each, had by that time already built “fine residences” on some of them, his advertisement explained. “High land, cool breezes and splendid ocean views in every cottage on every lot on Pilgrim Heights. . . . An ideal spot for a summer Cottage,” Phillips’s promotion stated. His purchases of Eastham Land Company lots perhaps reflected an intent to create a Pilgrim Heights-style colony in Eastham, but in 1920 he had conveyed nineteen of his holdings to Albert Greene Duncan of Brookline, who was an officer in Harmony Mills of Cohoes, New York, and president of the National Cotton Manufacturers Association.³⁰

In his deeds of the 1910s Phillips’s address is given as DeLand, Florida, and Provincetown, and in his Pilgrim Heights ad he gave DeLand as his winter address. The development of Florida as a winter resort in the 1910s and early 1920s had given not a few entrepreneurs and promoters the

²⁹ Sadie Flint, interview by Tales of Cape Cod, Inc., Eastham, 30 November 1977, Eastham Historical Society Archives, Eastham Public Library (hereafter cited as EA); “She’s Sadie, Sadie, Super Lady” and “Smith Heights” in Noel Beyle, *Go Eastham, Young Man!* (Falmouth: Kendall Publishing Co., 1977), 62-63, 74-75.

³⁰ Phillips’s Pilgrim Heights ad is in *Cape Cod Magazine* 3, 1 (May 1917). For deeds, see Phillips, George B. Ware, and William H. Ware to Albert Greene Duncan, 31 December 1920, BCD 374:523 and 374:527. On Duncan, see “Duncan Chosen Head of Cotton Mill Men,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 1 May 1914, accessible online by a name search on Ancestry.com.

notion that a similar approach might spell untold prosperity for the Cape. “Many people who are familiar with the development of Florida as a winter resort,” L. C. Hall wrote in *Cape Cod Magazine* in 1924, “appear to be firmly convinced that if the same methods were used on Cape Cod to establish it as a summer playground the phenomenal popularity which Florida has achieved could be duplicated in this region.” All the Cape needed, Hall argued, was “practical businessmen” with “vast sums of money”; combining the two could make Cape Cod “the Florida of the North.” Capitalists bankrolling the construction of “big hotels, amusement casinos, residential parks and beach resorts” could make Hyannis the northern Miami, Falmouth “a second St. Petersburg,” Provincetown another St. Augustine, and the stretch of shoreline from Hyannis to Osterville the next Palm Beach. “While thousands of people now summer on Cape Cod,” Hall predicted, “the time will come when it will have its hundreds of thousands.”³¹

Some commentators took a more tongue-in-cheek view of the development of the Cape, and of Florida, by the mid-1920s. Cooper Gaw of the *New Bedford Standard*, the closest large newspaper to the Cape, wrote about the Cape’s “boom” in a piece reprinted in the *Cape Codder*:

The Cape, from a real estate point of view, has been steadily progressing. They began by selling farms and lots. Then, discovering how plebian [*sic*] this was, the signs blazoned forth: “This estate for sale,” an estate being ever so much flossier than a farm or a building lot. Shops for the sale of bayberry candles appeared; other shops sold home-made preserves; then the shops became shoppes, and it was plain to the dullest comprehension that the Cape was on the way. The popularization of the motor car gave a great impetus to Cape Cod. Everywhere eating places appeared—it became a difficult problem for the tourist to decide whether he could stop at the Boar’s Head Inn and have chicken, steak and lobster dinner, or go on to the Wayside Tavern and have a chicken, steak and lobster dinner. Tea rooms grew in a profusion equalled [*sic*] only by beach grass and scrub oak: and last of all—crowning glory of our civilization—came the hot dog stand, a sign of culture in which the Cape is not surpassed by any other region on earth. So it would look as if nothing was left to complete the change of Cape Cod into something less attractive except a boom of Florida proportions.³²

By the mid-1920s it is not clear how many cars were actually passing through Eastham. Between

³¹ L. C. Hall, “Developing Our Cape,” *Cape Cod Magazine*, May 1924, 10.

³² “As One Editor Views the Cape Cod ‘Boom,’ (Cooper Gaw in the New Bedford Standard),” *The Cape Codder* 1, 1, May 1926, 11.

1909 and 1918, the number of cars passing through Sandwich rose from 75 to 559 on one August day, according to a survey by the state highway commission; the same survey showed a decline in the number of horse-drawn vehicles from 57 to 23.³³ However, this study uncovered no statistics for 1920s car traffic on the Cape. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921 expanded the national highway system and created the first logical plan of numbering it—the north-south Routes 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 15, and others were labeled with that act, as were the east-west Routes 2, 4, 6, 20, 44, and others. But by 1924 it does not appear that road signs designating Route 6 were in place: both the May 1924 *Cape Cod Magazine* auto tourists' map and the *Official Maps of New England* published by the National Survey Company of Chester, Vermont, do not show route numbers. Instead, Route 6 was indicated by red markers on poles, Route 28 by blue markers.

No major resurfacing projects are known to have occurred on Cape roads in the 1920s, yet, as Gaw's description suggests, the emergence of tourist services does not appear to have been hampered in any way. Cape historian James O'Connell cites Dennis's Sign of the Motor Car, established in 1910, as one of the first tourist-oriented businesses on the Cape. At first a home-based jigsaw-puzzle business and then a tea room, Hayden and Margaret Howes Richards had served more than eight thousand people at their Dennis business by 1925.³⁴ In May 1924 the Willow Tree Tea Room at East Brewster and Blue Parrot Tea Room at Falmouth advertised on the back of the auto tourists' map in *Cape Cod Magazine*; so did the "Sign of the Pine Tree Tea House," associated with the Cotuit Inn and Cottages. The Lobster Claw Motor Inn on King's Highway in Sandwich billed itself as "Cape Cod's Newest Automobile Resort," Wayside Inn at Chatham, "a Home Away from Home," focused on "Motor Parties and Week-End Guests," and Camp Opechee in Centerville offered "the shore dinners that made Cape Cod Famous." Among the gift shops that advertised was the Advocate Gift Shop in Provincetown, which sold "Cape Cod Products and Priscilla Pearls as well as "Fire Lighters, Windmills,

³³ O'Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 47.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

Bayberry Candles, Wild Beach Plum Jelly, Colored Local Photographs, Joe Lincoln's Cape Cod Stories and other standard books on Cape Cod. The Cape Cod Journal of the Pilgrim Fathers, 25 cents." At least two antiques stores operated on the Cape Cod by 1924, one at Hyannis and the other at Harwich port. Numerous garages, filling stations, and a car radiator works dotted Cape Cod. Even a Hyannis upholsterer who made mattresses and box springs—no doubt for a new market of summer and retirement homes—advertised in the May 1924 issue.

Five years later, the 1929 Cape Cod directory documented the presence of many more tourist services—fully 105 hotels, nineteen inns, twenty-nine places offering “rooms” or “board and room,” seven tea rooms (a dying institution by that time), sixty-nine restaurants of various sorts, seventy garages, twenty-two filling stations, forty-three antique stores, thirty-three gift shops, and nine tourist camps, and nine camps (some children's camps but including Francis W. Smith's cottages at Smith Heights). The directory also lists 121 contractors and carpenters and eighty-three realtors, which surely indicates the healthy market in the 1920s for land sales and house construction. The penchant for romantic names continued—Bayberry Lodge, Colonial Candles, Ye Old Cape Codder.

As historian Warren Belasco has noted, the 1920s “was a period of widespread historical renovation—old mills, Revolutionary era houses, and, in the late 1920s, Williamsburg. Antiquarians refurbished old inns for the motor trade or sought to convert long-neglected roadhouses into ‘wayside tavernes’ suggestive of coaching days. Roadside mansions and farmhouses became tearooms with names like Ye Ragged Robins, The TallyHo, and Pine Tree Inn . . . and antiques for sale to motor-wayfarers.” In the eyes of tourists, history “stopped before 1865,” Belasco has argued. “Later buildings and landmarks were just old. A colonial church was inspiring, but a late Victorian mansion was just ‘an eyesore.’” Cape Cod was able to capitalize on its maritime past, its native domestic architectural form, even its formerly disparaged landscape. As early as 1890 one traveler's guide described Provincetown as a “quaint old town by the sea,” and the glorification of the region peaked in the 1930s as regionalism in general reached its apogee in American popular literature and art. North of Orleans, U.S. 6 is shaded by

locust trees,” the WPA guide *Massachusetts: A Guide to Its Places and People* stated in 1937. “All along the route are views of far-reaching yellow dunes freckled with patches of coarse grass and clumps of bayberry; of exquisite small lakes cupped in piney hollows; of hamlets still retaining much of their ancient charm.”³⁵

“All summer long,” the authors of *Here’s New England* wrote in 1939, Provincetown’s Old Bayberry Candle Place “attracts crowds who come to see Cape Cod girls dip the fragrant green candles by hand in the old-fashioned manner.” The travel guide extolled the Cape’s “neat villages, tidy farmhouses, dignified white-clapboarded mansions built for sea-captains. Triangular village greens, quiet old burying grounds, steepled churches.” For those who couldn’t motor to the region Better Homes and Gardens described the beauties of its “genuine” house style. “A Cape Cod house, with all its quaint and subtle charm, has developed an identity that can’t be mistaken. The shingles, the shutters, and white picket fences, and low eaves with simple doorways and windows snuggled up under them—all lend to the charm of the infinitely livable houses found on Cape Cod.” As O’Connell has observed, native son Joseph Lincoln published numerous titles in the 1930s about the Cape’s assets which were joined by other titles promoting the legend and romance of the region.³⁶

Eastham was either slow to develop tourist services, did not advertise what it offered, or simply existed beneath the radar of official chroniclers. The first seems least likely. No hotels were listed in the May 1924 issue of *Cape Cod Magazine*; the 1929 Cape directory listed three hotels (Walton Inn, run by R. S. Walton; Overlook Inn, run by Thomas Kelley; and Lyndhurst Villa, run by Robert H. Mercer) but no inns, no tea rooms, no antique stores or gift shops, only one

³⁵ Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 29; Brown, *Inventing New England*, 204; *Massachusetts: A Guide to Its Places and People* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937), reprinted as *The WPA Guide to Massachusetts* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 494.

³⁶ *Here’s New England*, 23, 21; “A Genuine Cape Cod House,” *Better Homes & Gardens*, 1936; O’Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 64-65. Other 1930s books about the cape include Josef Berger (pen name Jeremiah Digges), *Cape Cod Pilot* (1937), Elizabeth Reynaud, *The Narrow Land: Folk Chronicles of Old Cape Cod* (1934), Katharine Smith and Edith Shay, *Down the Cape* (1936), and Arthur Wilson Tarbell, *Cape Cod Ahoy! A Travel Book for the Summer Visitor* (1932).

restaurant (Brackett and Young), no filling stations but two garages (Herman Dill's and the Eastham Garage). It also listed no carpenters or contractors, though seventeen are listed in the 1930 Eastham census. Among the seven tourists' camps listed in that year's Cape directory, though, is Eastham Camps. Eastham Camps were run by Harry Whitford, a 40-year-old Rhode Island man who lived with two Maine-born aunts, Carrie L. Hurd, age 60, and Mary I. Wyman, age 62, and Wyman's husband Reuben, age 70. The Eastham census listed him as a tourist camp proprietor. He lived in Eastham during the summer and in Somerville for at least part of the winter, where the census in that city listed his occupation as house carpenter; it is at least possible that he built the cabins at Eastham Camps. The 1929 directory carried a quarter-page advertisement for the camps, both cabins and tent sites marketed to tourists and "week end parties" and "as "winter camps for gunners." The ad noted that Eastham camps was marked by "a 40 Foot Steel Pole in Front of Camp — With a Flag by Day and a Light by Night." By 1929 as well, Joseph A. Cobb offered board and rooms on Kings Highway (Route 6). Comfort Cottage or Comfort Inn, which operated between 1907 and 1930, was not listed in the 1929 directory; nor were the six cottages built by the Collins family in 1928-29 and opened in 1929.³⁷

The increase in roadside services stimulated a few cautionary voices amid those urging wholesale development. Benton MacKaye, the well-known planner who had proposed creating the Appalachian Trail in 1921, argued for preserving "the Cape Cod Environment" before a luncheon meeting of the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce on 1 December 1927. First urging his audience not to be "scared of the word 'Plan' or 'planning'" because its aim was "to make the region most useful for all men everywhere," he assured everyone that certainly the Cape needed industry. Yet its movers and shakers must develop industry without sacrificing the region's "feeling," or "environment." "The 'Cape Cod Environment' is known from coast to coast: if the home folks allow industry to become built up on Cape Cod so as to damage this environment they will be destroying their region's main asset: they will kill the goose that lays the golden egg." To MacKaye preserving and developing the Cape's or any other region's environment lay

³⁷ *Dunham's 1929 Eastham (Mass.) Street Directory*; Old Town Center Historic District Area Form, MHC.

in how one handled “the various little things which form the material side of a region, viz. (a) Wayside structures; (b) Land & water; (c) Villages and towns,” that is, all the things that can be seen from the road and are what make people like the feeling of a place.” On the two main roads, Routes 6 and 28, a plan must be formed to locate roadside wayside structures and open space and to retain villages and towns “around their present centers, and not as aimless stringtowns.” Such plans, MacKaye proclaimed, “would lay the base for the retention—and the extension—of the One Big Thing you have to contribute to the rest of the U.S.—viz. the ‘Cape Cod Environment.’”³⁸ Coordinated planning was not, however, instituted in most Cape towns for more than two decades afterward.

By 1930, the occupational profile of Eastham residents began to reflect the shift toward a tourism-service economy. The proportion of the town’s work force in service occupations increased from 10.4 to 13.7 per cent between 1900 and 1930, in trades from 10.4 to 18.5 per cent, in unskilled labor from 2.0 to 6.8 per cent, and in maritime/fisheries from 9.9 to 21.0 per cent. The forty-three persons in maritime trades included twenty-nine shellfishermen and their helpers, which suggests a market orientation and perhaps one strongly oriented to tourists. Among trades were the seventeen carpenter/contractors, three house painters, two masons, an engineer, a steam roller operator, an electrician’s helper, a plumber, and a draftsman. There were also a garage proprietor and four auto mechanics. The presence of golf links in Eastham is attested by a greenskeeper, a golf links mechanic, and four golf links laborers. Among the unskilled work force too were four roads laborers, perhaps reflecting the development of new roads in subdivisions, and one house laborer.

By that time Nellie’s Tea Room was probably in business next to the garage Arthur Nickerson ran on Route 6. Eastham house carpenter Clayton O. Horton built the structure in 1924 and ran it as a summer store for several years before selling it to George A. and Nellie Nickerson. Nellie

³⁸ [Benton MacKaye], “Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce Meeting of December 17th, 1927” (Notes), Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, NH. Thanks to O’Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, for this reference, and Mary Sikora, Nickerson Room, Cape Cod Community College, for tracking down a copy from Dartmouth.

Nickerson set the business up as a tea room and is said to have had both picnic and tenting space in the rear. According to her daughter Shirley, born about 1922, “That tea room that we were talking about, . . . Mother ran that in the summertime and made a little money. But it was just a summer store there. And then several times they rented it in the wintertime, like for a house sort of for people to live in. But mostly the people she rented it to didn’t have very much money and she didn’t get paid. But then finally, later on, then she started putting groceries in along with the tea room and turned it into a grocery store. So she had that right up until wartimes.”³⁹

The most pronounced change in Eastham’s occupational profile was agricultural work, which occupied 58.4 per cent of the work force in 1900 but only 21.0 per cent in 1930. In the 1950s, economic geographer Lewis Alexander suggested that some farmers had turned their primary focus to other skills as the viability of farming declined. “The small independent dairy farmers on the Cape, for example, can do little to compete against the pasteurized dairy products sent daily by truck from the great Boston dairy plants,” Alexander noted; indeed, the number of cows in Eastham had fallen from 181 in 1885 to 125 in 1900 to 44 in 1940. The poultry and egg economy had also collapsed by that time, the number of fowl plummeting from 8,043 in 1900 to only 745 in 1940; by that time, Eastham’s rural policy committee stated, “there are no strictly commercial poultry farms in the town.” Bernard Collins had used materials from chicken coops that once stood on his property in some of the rental cottages he built there in 1928-29.⁴⁰

By the turn of the century Eastham farmers had switched the bulk of their effort to market gardening, and by 1905 the town led Barnstable County in sale of vegetables, valued at \$26,819. A rust-resistant strain of asparagus was quickly planted after a fungus decimated the crop in 1901; by 1920 150 acres were planted in town, and by 1930 Eastham farmers had planted more than 250 acres of asparagus. Arthur Wilson Tarbell, in *Cape Cod Ahoy!* (1932), stated that

³⁹ See Beyle, *Go Eastham Young Man!*, 42 n., and Shirley Nickerson Williams and George Nickerson, interview with Nathan Anthony, Orleans, MA, 24 March 1988, EA.

⁴⁰ Alexander, “Impact of Tourism,” 324; Rural Policy Committee, “Preliminary Report,” 12; Old Town Center Historic District Area Form.

“several truckloads” traveled to Boston every night in the three-month season. Gross returns, Tarbell stated, averaged four hundred dollars an acre, and 150,000 bunches were harvested before about the Fourth of July. “It is left for the humble carrot, and that least arrogant of ground tubers, the turnip, to provide profitable fall and winter crops.”⁴¹ Yet even the asparagus crop declined, largely due to the advent of refrigerated rail transport and the introduction of vast quantities of southern-grown asparagus on the Boston market. Asparagus prices dropped accordingly, and the prices fell below production costs for the small Eastham farms.⁴²

By 1940, the Eastham Rural Policy Committee recognized market gardening as “one of the two most important agricultural enterprises in Eastham. The large summer influx of people to the Cape bring with them an expanded demand for fresh vegetables. The local producers have a transportation advantage which compensates for their recourse to the sandy soils.” At that time, the committee noted, there were about thirteen market gardeners in town on about 128 acres. The state’s Department of Labor and Industries had noted how important “the entertainment of summer visitors” was to the region overall in 1922:

With the influx of an increasingly large summer population, opportunity has been afforded to the year-round residents of the Cape to dispose locally of much of the produce of their farms and market gardens, and in other ways to profit through catering to the needs of the many who sojourn there for a time. . . . in addition to these [hotels] there are numerous boarding houses and private homes where summer visitors can find accommodations. There is hardly a seashore village which has not its summer colony, and every year many additional summer cottages are erected by local contractors and building tradesmen.⁴³

⁴¹ Eastham Center Historic District Area Form, Massachusetts Historic Commission; Tarbell quoted in Noel W. Beyle, *Entering Eastham* (Falmouth: Kendall Printing, 1976), 3.

⁴² Rural Policy Committee, “Preliminary Report,” 12. This report also lays blame at the feet of the members of the Eastham Farmers’ Association, formed in 1924 as a cooperative to market Eastham asparagus and turnips. Their inability to see an advantage in cooperative marketing and to “subordinate individual wishes to those of the majority” were, along with the drop in asparagus prices and the small size of Eastham farms, cited as reasons for the cooperative’s decline and thus its ability to convince Boston growers that Nauset Brand asparagus was a premium brand.

⁴³ Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries, *Population and Resources of Cape Cod* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1922), cited in Old Town Center Historic District Area Form. Alexander, “Impact of Tourism,” 324, noted the effect of the depression on agriculture on the Cape: “In the slack seasons of the 1930’s, Cape Codders returned to farming: the proportion of land in farms to total area rose from 8 per cent in 1930 to 17 per cent in 1935. But the development was only temporary. The percentage decline to 14 in 1940, and then fell to 8 percent in 1950.”

As Alonzo Higgins had recognized at an early point, acres they had once farmed had more value for other uses. As Alexander put it, “While an acre of land close to the beach may be worth several thousand dollars to its owner if split up and sold as building lots, its value as farm land would be considerably less.”⁴⁴ By 1923, the land formerly part of the nineteenth-century farmsteads of Nathan and John Hopkins south side of Campground Road, at its east end had been subdivided into thirty-five lots, 150 feet deep and 50 feet wide. Six years later, manufacturer Harry Pond Townsend of Hartford, Connecticut developed a large section of other land John Hopkins and the farmer Russell Higgins had owned on the north side of Campground Road and created forty-one lots east of Higgins Road, labeled “supposed old town way” on one plan, and twenty-six lots west of it. What became Pine, Walker, Hill, Griffin’s, and Townsend roads were platted with these subdivisions. In addition, there were three plots deeded to Townsend’s wife Margaret and a “reserved open field” bordering Bay Road that later owner Clarence E. Walker subdivided after World War II. On Kingsbury Beach Road, on the whole developed later than Campground Road, the earliest known subdivision dates to 1924, when Leroy K. Houghton, a schoolteacher in Boston in 1920 and a “schoolmaster” there in 1930, registered a plan for 111 lots, eleven of them fronting what appears to be the extension of “Bay Queen” or Kingsbury Beach Road to Cape Cod Bay. In 1923 Houghton had purchased thirty-nine acres there from Francis W. Smith, no doubt inherited from his father Nathaniel, that appears to have stretched from his native Thumpertown on the north to the land of the Philip and Richard F. Smith families on the south. Hattie C. Williams, the daughter of farmer Richard F. Smith, already owned the house known as the “Old Bay Queen,” now 1145 Kingsbury Beach Road, when Houghton drew up his plan. He had sold thirteen other lots by that time as well. Houghton deeded Kingsbury Beach Road to the town in 1935.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Alexander, “Impact of Tourism,” 324.

⁴⁵ See BCP 11:7, 51:83, and 51:85 for the Campground Road plans and 15:121 for the Kingsbury Beach Road plan. See Houghton to Town of Eastham, 24 August 1935, BCD 424:372 for transfer of the road to the town.

O’Connell has stated that the Great Depression triggered a “drastic downturn in vacationing, especially in 1932 and 1933,” and both land transfers and subdivision plans in the areas surveyed for this project reflect a general absence of activity until about 1936-37.⁴⁶ The town does appear to have taken numerous properties for nonpayment of taxes beginning in 1939 and extending into the war years, but research for this context has made no comprehensive analysis of this trend. By 1935, when 85 per cent of all vacation travel in the United States was by car, the tourist economy began to improve. Jeremiah Digges noted in *Cape Cod Pilot* that 175,000 vacationers came to the Cape in 1936; the summer population that year was five times the size of the winter population. On one summer Sunday that year more than 55,000 cars had crossed one of the Cape Cod Canal’s two new bridges (the Bourne and the Sagamore), just opened in 1935. Moreover, the Depression ironically stimulated leisure travel, as O’Connell has pointed out, because work weeks were shorter (the 1937 Fair Labor Standards Act mandated the maximum forty-hour work week) and a greater proportion of factory workers had paid vacations. Federal public and civil works projects such as construction of the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges, widening the Cape Cod Canal, and the Civilian Conservation Corps’ Camp Wellfleet put income in the pockets of Cape residents as well and may in other ways have stimulated the tourist economy. Such other transportation improvements as the 1938 widening and straightening of Route 6 from the Orleans rotary north for about three miles to four lanes.⁴⁷ “Within the past two decades,” wrote Digges in his *Cape Cod Pilot* of 1937, “the tourist has stepped into the leading role; ‘summer business’ has overshadowed all others; for most of the towns it is now the mainstay.”⁴⁸

The steady increase in car registration and traffic—where one of every 13.0 persons had

⁴⁶ O’Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 62. However, Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 142-43, has noted that “middle-class Americans continued to take car vacations in early 1930s, spending almost as much on gas, oil, and other traveling expenses in 1933 and in 1929; with the slight economic upturn in 1935, these expenditures reached an all time high.” The only plan we know of on either Campground or Kingsbury Beach Road, other than those delineating individual parcel lines, is “Subdivision of Higgins Acres on Cape Cod, Eastham Mass. . . . June 1938,” BCP 74:135, with five lots along the south side of Campground Road and the other twenty-two along “Higgins Lane,” now Huckleberry Lane.

⁴⁷ Rae, *Road and the Car*, 142 table 7.2; O’Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 49; Brown, *Inventing New England*, 209; Lowe, *Nauset on Cape Cod*, 39.

⁴⁸ *People and Places on the Outer Cape*, 65.

registered a car in 1920, one of every 4.8 persons had by 1940—doomed rail transport. North Eastham’s rail depot closed in 1935; passenger service throughout the Cape stopped completely in the early 1940s, and the rails were taken up in 1967. Just as the Collinses’ chicken coops found their way into tourist cottages, the North Eastham depot was dismantled and in some fashion “recycled as a summer cottage.”⁴⁹

Eastham, 1945-60

The Second World War hurt the Cape tourist economy in two ways. First, the ban on pleasure driving and gas and tire rationing put a serious crimp in vacation travel; second, a shortage of building materials made new home construction virtually impossible. Yet even during the war years land began to change hands quite often on Campground and Kingsbury Beach roads; many of the transfers on Campground Road took advantage of the low prices that resulted from town tax takings. And by 1946 the tourism picture began to change rapidly and dramatically. Between 1945 and 1950 building starts averaged 125 each year as the economy recovered and turned its attention to domestic needs. Eastham’s population, which had climbed, but very slowly, between 1920 and 1940—from 530 to 582—increased by 50 per cent to 875 by 1950. It rose to 1,200 in 1960, an increase of 37 per cent. In Barnstable County, the permanent population grew by 74 per cent between 1920 and 1950, while in Massachusetts overall it rose by only 21 per cent over the same three decades.⁵⁰

“With the rapidly increasing population,” Eastham historian Alice Lowe wrote in 1968, “there is a desire to preserve the natural character of the old township. At the annual meeting held in February 1948 an important step was taken, the town becoming the first on the lower Cape to support the recommendations of its Planning Board. At that meeting voters approved several building and subdivision regulations in the hope of preventing any possible exploitation or

⁴⁹ Rae, *Road and the Car*, 50 table 3.4; Lowe, *Nauset on Cape Cod*, 39; Eastham Center Historic District Area Form.

⁵⁰ O’Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 62; Old Town Center Historic District Area Form; Rural Policy Committee, “Preliminary Report,” 7; Alexander, “Impact of Tourism,” 321-23.

unrestricted development there.” As other uses for land grew less viable, local officials regarded the relative explosion in population with increasing alarm. If not controlled, could Eastham become a town of infinitely smaller lots and correspondingly tinier houses?

It is possible, too, that Eastham was responding to the fact that its “natural character” was celebrated by that point in certain artistic and literary circles. Frank Benson and Dwight Blaney had both painted Eastham views, and camp logs document that the American Impressionist painters Willard Metcalf, Edmund C. Tarbell, and Joseph De Camp and the sculptor Bela Pratt, a protegee of Augustus St. Gaudens, visited there.⁵¹ At a later time, Edward Hopper also painted often in Eastham. Henry Beston (born Henry Beston Sheahan, the son of a Quincy physician), first came to Eastham’s Overlook Inn after the First World War, when he served in both the American ambulance service and as a Navy press representative. In 1925, he had Eastham contractor Harvey Moore build the small cottage he called “Fo’castle” on five acres he leased on the dune land on the ocean. Beston documented the year he spent there in *The Outermost House* (1928), which many critics regard as the earliest and best environmental writing about Cape Cod. Often held in equal esteem among readers and critics of Cape nature writing is Wyman Richardson’s *The House on Nauset Marsh* (1947), the account of Maurice Howe Richardson’s son about his family’s life at the camp his father and Frank Benson had purchased in 1892. Both books were written in and about Eastham, the latter just a year before the town met to propose planning and zoning rules.

After World War II, Eastham faced a situation in which virtually no parties other than real estate developers competed for vacant land. Across the Cape, cultivated land had virtually disappeared by 1950. While 18 per cent of Barnstable County had been farmed in 1920, only 8 per cent was thirty years later; where 1,500 milk cows had grazed in pastures and meadows in 1920, less than

⁵¹ Bedford, *Benson, American Impressionist*, 55-56. For biographical background on Benson and other painters of his time, see H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), and Trevor J. Fairbrother et al., *The Bostonians: Painters of an Elegant Age, 1870-1930* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1986).

600 did in 1950. In Eastham, the cow population had declined from 80 in 1920 to 44 in 1940. Not only was farm land less and less apt to occupy open space: industrial uses had long since been left out of the question. Since 1900 every sort of manufactured good the Cape's population needed came from New Bedford, Brockton, or Boston: the 1929 Cape directory was filled from front to back with advertisements from New Bedford merchants offering jewelry, typewriters, clothing, dry goods, oriental rugs and other floor coverings, furniture, ice cream, barber supplies, leather goods and trunks, sign painting, plate glass, artists' materials, and store fixtures.⁵²

What Eastham faced was common to all Cape towns by the early 1950s. Norman H. Cook of the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce estimated that 200,000 vacationers had come to Cape Cod in the summer of 1951. Tourism was the region's premier industry by the early 1950s. Contributing \$70 million to the Cape's economy, it towered over agriculture, fishing, and manufacturing, which combined to add only \$8 million to that base. More improvements to the roads would provide further impetus to tourism. The state opened the Mid-Cape Highway, at first only one lane in each direction, between the Sagamore Bridge and exit 6 in Hyannis, in 1950. In 1954 the state project to make the highway two lanes in each direction to Dennis. Part of the idea behind the Mid-Cape Highway was to protect the character of Cape villages, much as Benton MacKaye had advised in 1927, and to encourage development in the interior of the region. The two-lane section of the road reached the Orleans rotary by 1959, and the four-lane section reached Dennis by 1971.⁵³

Over time there was little change in the background of persons who sought to buy property on the Cape, and only the occasional oral history or article in popular media provides insight into the vast community of renters. While the federal census and city directories are valuable indicators of the occupational status of buyers, the census becomes an increasingly poor one in

⁵² Alexander, "Impact of Tourism," 324; Rural Policy Committee, *Preliminary Report*, 12; Lowe, *Nauset on Cape Cod*, 62.

⁵³ Alexander, "Impact of Tourism," 322-23; O'Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 96, 98.

the postwar years. The 1930 census is the last individual listing of Americans available to researchers, and directories are often few and far between, especially outside Massachusetts. Where this study has been able to review directories for postwar buyers, however, occupations are little different than among prewar buyers — skilled factory workers, carpenters, salesmen, people running their own small businesses such as hardware stores, lodging houses, garages, and trucking firms, bookkeepers and stenographers, schoolteachers, physicians and a lawyer. For eighty-four properties on Campground Road, Kingsbury Beach Road, and the areas adjacent to them included in their various subdivisions, the permanent residences of 189 buyers up to 1960 are identified on deeds.⁵⁴ Excluding the very few transactions that took place between Eastham and other Cape buyers, 148 came from Massachusetts places, eleven from New York, nine from Connecticut, seven each from New Hampshire and Rhode Island, two from New Jersey, and one each from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, and California. Of the Massachusetts buyers, eighteen were from Boston, another sixty-two were from towns inside Route 128 (from Quincy and Milton on the south, Lynn on the north, and Newton on the west), sixteen were from towns inside Interstate 495, twenty-three were from Worcester and the towns surrounding it, ten from Springfield and its adjacent towns, and nineteen from other Massachusetts towns (including Leominster, Fall River, Acton, Attleboro, and Foxboro).

George Duffy's story is one that puts flesh on the bones of these statistics; his son George, according to Noel Beyle, graduated Arlington High School in 1941 and joined the U.S. Navy in 1942. Kenelm Collins has noted that George Duffy Jr. was a Navy "short shot fighter pilot" who came back to his parents' summer home on Campground Road after the war and also settled permanently in Eastham. Two other personal histories also help fill out this data. From 1919 on, the family of Edward J. Brown used to rent a cottage on Campground Beach for each summer season, and, in 1952, after returning from his service in the Army, he and his wife Bernice

⁵⁴ The Campground Road area includes Campground, Bay, Giles, Griffin, Higgins, Hill, Pine, Townsend, and Walker Roads, Gails and Marions Way, Russell Avenue, Millenium Lane, and West Shore Drive. The Kingsbury Beach Road area includes Fisher, Kingsbury Beach Roads, Penney, I-De-Ho, and Longstreet Lane, and Nycoma Way. On abutting roads off both Campground and Kingsbury Beach Roads, only properties embraced in relevant subdivisions or otherwise significant are included in this count.

returned to Eastham and bought Barton's store, which also had gas pumps and tourist cottages. "I got tired of working for someone else and I figured if I put in as many hours for myself I could make a good living," Brown told an interviewer in 1995. "I knew the area. I used to summer down here. . . . So we scraped up the money in 1952 and bought it." In August 1951, Roger P. and Edith P. Lindholm bought 50 Kingsbury Road from Kenneth O. and Ardella Turner. Both were from Quincy; Turner was probably a general contractor at that time. In the 1930 census, both families were in Quincy; Turner was a retail milk salesman with a sixteen-month-old daughter, Edith P., and John Lindholm, a second-generation Swede who drove a truck for a news company, had an eight-year-old son, Roger P. It seems quite likely that Kenneth Turner was Lindholm's father-in-law. A May 1955 photographic feature in *Cosmopolitan* Magazine on new residents of the Cape showed two photographs of the Lindholms, one of them raking pine needles off their lawn, the other of the two swinging their son Ricky between them on their way back from a Cape hunting trip. "Roger Lindholm was teaching photography courses at Boston University when he heard a cousin remark that there weren't enough barbers on Cape Cod. He promptly enrolled in barber college, and now has his own shop in Orleans, midway down the Cape," the caption read, and it quoted Roger Lindholm to state, "We live at our own pace, not somebody else's. . . . When the tide is right, we go clamming. And every week I freeze a quart of oysters. It doesn't cost a cent to live like a gourmet here."⁵⁵

As veterans such as George Duffy Sr. and Edward J. Brown returned home and started families, incomes grew, and cars returned to the roads, enterprising developers got a second wind. Pelton Goudey, whose schoolteacher parents had purchased a one-acre parcel on the south side of Campground Road from Eastham storekeeper Samuel F. Brackett in 1937, subdivided it into three lots a decade later. The parcels sat just across from the nineteenth-century Methodist

⁵⁵ On Duffy, see Beyle, *Go Eastham, Young Man!*, and Collins, speech at Eastham Historical Society, EA; on the Browns, see Bernice and Edward Brown, interview with Rosemary Abbott, 9 November 1995, EA; on the Lindholms, see Kenneth O. Turner and wife Ardella Turner, 36 Border Street, Quincy, for unstated consideration, to Roger P. and Edith P. Lindholm, 27 August 1951, BCD 791:476, and Ad Clark, "Settlers in the Narrow Land," *Cosmopolitan* Magazine, May 1955. The author ran across a photocopy of this article in the Ralph Chase Papers, EA.

campground, which was not itself subdivided until 1955. At that time the plumber George S. and Helen E. Duffy, whose family lived in a three-decker home in Arlington and had summered on Campground Road for some years, registered a plan of twelve lots at the northwest corner of Campground Road with Herring Brook and Massasoit Road on the east end. The plan also created Millennium Lane with a suburban-style cul-de-sac at its northwestern axis. In 1947, according to Eastham historian Noel Beyle, the Duffy family began to live permanently in a house at the corner of Campground and Bay roads. A 1955 photographic album document signage in Eastham shows his, reading, “G. S. Duffy, Camp Ground Rd., Eastham Plumbing & Heating Supplies / Cottages Winterized / Wells.”⁵⁶

The Duffy subdivision was the last major one on Campground Road, excepting one that in fact made larger lots out of a previous plan. Before the end of the war Harry Pond Townsend died, and by 1949 Clarence E. Walker bought nearly all of the land Townsend had owned on the north side of Campground Road between the campground and Griffin’s Way. Walker, listed as a house carpenter in the Eastham 1930 census, had moved to the town in the 1920s from Everett near Boston, where he worked in 1920 as a chauffeur for a coal company. In 1910 he had been in Lynn; there he worked driving a milk company wagon. Walker’s 1949 plan, prepared one year after the town of Eastham passed its building and subdivision regulations, appears responsive, willingly or not, to the town’s new rules. Between Pine and Higgins roads east to west and Campground Road and a “vehicle track” south to north (the latter probably the remnant of what earlier deeds often termed “the road leading to B. K. Mayo’s dwelling house”), Townsend’s plan laid out thirty-seven parcels. Walker’s had only nineteen in the same space. Between Higgins Road on the east and Griffin’s Way on the west and the same south-north bounds, Walker’s “Camp Ground Pines” subdivision platted eight lots compared to seventeen on Townsend’s 1929 plan.

⁵⁶ The Goudey plan is BCP 96:25, the Duffy plan 126:73. For background on the Duffy family see Kenelm Collins, speech at Eastham Historical Society, 26 October 1997, Eastham Methodist Church, EA, and Noel W. Beyle, *Go Eastham Young Man!*. For the deed to the campground see BCD 647:65.

On the other hand, Kingsbury Beach Road was primarily a postwar creation. Much of the land from Great Pond on the south reaching west to Cape Cod Bay was in the hands of the families of Richard F. (1832-96) and Philip Smith (1821-91), who became brothers-in-law when Philip Smith married Richard's sister Esther (1825-95). Much of the Richard F. Smith land tended to descend through the family, but beginning in 1946 Philip Smith's grandson Luther Philip M. Smith (1879-1955) and great-grandson Luther Phair Smith (1901-72) began to subdivide and sell the family's former farm lands. In 1947, across the street from a 3.5 acre parcel his son Luther sold the year before out of a larger property he owned between Kingsbury Beach Road and Great Pond, Philip M. Smith laid out a 152-lot subdivision between what is now Weir Road on the east and a theoretical northward extension of the west line of Penny Lane. The latter, called Boundary Lane on Smith's plan, was the eastern edge of Leroy K. Houghton's 1924 development. On the other side of Weir (then Pit) Road, Luther P. Smith subdivided a little more than four acres into two roughly equal lots in 1947. Just east of those lots and on the same north side of Kingsbury Beach Road, Earl M. Burgess, who had been a produce dealer and shipper in Providence in 1930, bought 4.5 acres from the widow of Richard F. Smith (1873-1942, son of the first-mentioned Richard F. Smith) in 1945, and in July 1949 he subdivided that parcel into six lots. The largest, 2.1 acres, bordered Smith's land on the west; the smallest, 23,000 square feet, bordered Great Pond Road on the east. Marion Spink, the widow of Leland K. Spink, who owned land before 1946 on both sides of Kingsbury Beach Road amid the Philip M. Smith development, registered a fourteen-lot subdivision across from Smith's in 1959. It included the road now known as Leland Road and, roughly parallel to the shore, Penny Lane. Several major developments were plotted just off Kingsbury Beach road, one by Luther P. and Philip M. Smith in 1956 and another by Eric and Marie A. Thorson in 1957; this latter featured twenty-five lots with eight fronting the south side of Kingsbury Beach Road, but none were apparently developed. Numerous other post-1960 subdivision plans exist for the road.

By 1960, only 2 per cent of Eastham's work force was in agriculture or fishing, 25 per cent worked in construction, and 24 per cent worked in "trade," a category that probably embraces

service occupations.⁵⁷ In Wellfleet in 1960, nonresident taxpayers owned 70 to 75 per cent of all property in town; in summer the population was 10,000, while in winter it fell to just 1,400.⁵⁸ Eastham's situation was probably not as extreme on either measure, but it probably showed the same imbalanced tendencies. The other side of 1960 presented new challenges, among them the completion of Route 3 from Boston, the impact of the completion of all the major eastern interstate highways (the Massachusetts Turnpike had been completed in 1957, the Connecticut Turnpike in 1958, but the New York Thruway and New Jersey Turnpikes were not yet completed, to say nothing of the major urban arterials and Route 95), and increasing affluence and car ownership. The creation of Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961 stemmed the development tide in much of the northeastern part of the town, but the increasing appeal of what Benton MacKaye termed "the Cape Cod Environment" has applied unceasing pressure on land prices elsewhere.

⁵⁷ O'Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod*, 98. This source does not cite the occupational categories for the remaining 49 percent of the Eastham workforce; the data is taken from Thad Lewis Beyle, "The Cape Cod national Seashore: A Study in Conflict" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1963), 31.

⁵⁸ *People and Places on the Outer Cape*, 65.